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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7628
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0122
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0519
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0198
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0171

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000602

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2017
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [GM](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: GERMAN PLANS TO HELP SECURE THE LEBANON-SYRIA
BORDER

REF: A. BERLIN 457
[1](#)B. BEIRUT 337

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs Robert F. Cekuta
for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Germany plans a four-step process to help Lebanon secure its border with Syria by 01/01/2008, beginning with a pilot project in the north. Equipment deliveries and training have begun. The 2006 German government team examining the prospects found, according to a recently released German report, poor interagency cooperation in Lebanon and a lack of training and equipment would slow down the project. German officials report Prime Minister Siniora agreed to the project's proposed pace and appointed officials to the new inter-agency structures Germany urged that he create. Siniora reportedly told German officials he could not sell domestically an EU or UN program. Therefore Germany is pursuing a bilateral program with "Lebanese ownership." There would be a gradual increase in German and other European assistance and training, the officials predicted. Germany, however, estimates a project funding gap of five million Euros and would welcome U.S. support. End Summary.

Lebanese Circumstances Determine Deliberate Pace

[1](#)2. (C) German MFA officer Gerhard Schlaudraff provided emboffs with the 2006 Geran assessment team's 60-page report on Lebanese and and sea borders and Beirut airport. The rept concludes Lebanese border officials are poorly equipped, ill trained, and do not cooperate with ne another. In a separate conversation, MOI Diretor General for the Federal Police Ruediger Kassmade the same points to EMIN. The German FederalPolice are conducting the current programs, alon the German Customs, and also led the German study. Kass added that buildings did not have needed equipment or sometimes even electricity and officers did not have phones or radios to communicate with one another. The assessment team determined Lebanon could not coordinate its agencies or absorb international expertise and equipment any faster than the pace Germany is proposing for its effort. Schlaudraff stressed the need for Lebanese ownership, to help in assessing their own needs, deciding what they want, and learning to work together. Schlaudraff also provided a copy of the PowerPoint slides MOI State Secretary Hanning used to brief PM Siniora in Beirut early March (a copy of the slides have been provided to EUR/AGS.)

German Program: Step One, Five Months of Groundwork

13. (C) Discussing the German program, Schlaudraff said the first phase, which is currently underway, is a five month period in which to brief Lebanese stakeholders, establish interagency teams, provide basic training, create an operations center, procure equipment, and install an inter-operable radio system. Asked if this period could be shortened, Schlaudraff responded the key was the operations center and he cannot imagine experts could set the facility up any faster. That said, Germany is prepared to go as fast as Lebanese capabilities allow, Schlaudraff noted.

14. (C) The inter-agency cooperation Germany plans to build during this period include a Lebanese Border Committee ("Steering Committee"), chaired by the Internal Security Forces (ISF). This Committee will oversee the Common Implementation Unit ("Project Management Unit"), chaired by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). The ISF, General Security, and General Customs would also be part of the Implementation Unit. Schlaudraff said the domination of these agencies by various factions adds complexity (ISF is dominated by Sunnis, General Security by Shi'ites, and General Customs by Christians, according to Schlaudraff). Establishing these new structures and getting them right are vital to communication, cooperation, and coordination, Schlaudraff continued.

Step Two and Three: Operations and Assessment

15. (C) The second phase is three months of operations at the El Aarrida and El Abboudiye northern border crossing points, plus joint mobile operations in between the two areas. The third phase of the German proposal is one month of project assessment.

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Step Four: Entire Border by 01/01/2008

16. (C) The project's final phase is expansion to the entire Lebanese land border on January 1. (Note: Schlaudraff said there are only four official land border crossing points -- two in the north and two in the east. Germany aims to use mobile patrols to control the rest of the border without criminalizing regular civilians who cross the border informally, Schlaudraff said. End Note.)

Equipment, Funding and International Partners

17. (C) Schlaudraff said Germany is prepared to provide four million Euros of equipment. He said the German government has already provided a Siemens coastal radar system and a large machine to scan the contents of shipping containers. Germans are currently in Lebanon training local officials to use both systems. The German government estimates Lebanon needs another three million Euros of communication equipment and a half million Euros each for the operations center and training. Schlaudraff said Canada, Denmark and the UK may contribute; the UK is interested in setting up the operations center. Schlaudraff said he had heard the U.S. might be willing to provide funding as well, something the German government would welcome. As for EU or other multilateral support, Schlaudraff said Siniora had told Hanning that he could not sell such a program domestically: it had to remain bilateral.

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